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STATE FOR EUR/WE, WHA/AND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/13/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [XL](#) [NT](#) [VE](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: RFG -- NETHERLANDS: STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENT  
UPDATE

REF: STATE 149873

Classified By: Ambassador Roland Arnall, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) This is a request for guidance; please see para 4.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Per reftel, DCM Gallagher raised the lack of progress made on a long-term status of forces agreement (SOFA) for the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba with MFA Head of the North America Directorate Jos Schellars on November 1. According to Schellars, the MFA Legal Department had just received comments from the island governments regarding our draft long-term agreement. Schellars said their legal experts must first review and incorporate these comments, but expected to provide us with an official response "soon."

[1](#)3. (SBU) Ambassador Arnall raised the long-term SOFA with MFA Political Director Pieter de Gooijer on November 7. De Gooijer reiterated senior MFA support for a long-term agreement, noting that the GONL's preferred approach is for a multi-year SOFA. Ambassador Arnall raised the possibility of bringing a U.S. legal expert team to The Hague to discuss the matter further; de Gooijer agreed with this approach.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment/Action request: We have now raised the long-term SOFA at the political director level -- while the MFA is committed to establishing such an agreement, there is a decided lack of urgency on the Dutch side. Time is running out if we are to be successful in obtaining a long-term agreement before it becomes again necessary to extend the current short-term agreement in May 2008. In that respect, and per de Gooijer's concurrence, we recommend Washington propose dates for a possible delegation to The Hague or teleconference to discuss the agreement -- this may help jump-start negotiations.

Arnall